1: Cooper E-4 (no date) 1946 SH5 Tehuelche SH5

or perhaps, as D'Orbigny appears to have believed (1835–47, 2:100), from the *Puelche*. Its introduction was accompanied and followed by very great changes in general *Tehuelche* culture (Cooper, 1925, pp. 408–409, details), including the addition of horse meat to the diet.

Hunting.—The early *Tehuelche* used tame young guanacos as decoys in hunting guanacos (Pigafetta, 1906, 1:52; Mori, [1535], 1889, p. 320), and rhea plumage as head and body camouflage to approach within killing distance of rheas. Fletcher (1854, pp. 41–42) reported the use of nets in rhea hunting. Later *Tehuelche* hunters commonly scattered, circled, and closed in to hunt the guanaco and the rhea (pl. 40, *top*); in the drive, pumas were often caught in the circle and killed (pl. 40, *bottom*). The dogs were of great aid in hunting. Our sources mention no snares or deadfalls as used for any animals. (For details on hunting, cf. Schmid, 1860, pp. 363–364, 366, and Outes, 1928 d.)

Food preparation and storage.—Jerked guanaco meat, dried or smoked and pounded, was mixed with rhea or other grease to make pemmican, which was stored for use in winter or in stormy weather (Coan, 1880, p. 84). Fat, marrow, and internal organs of guanaco, such as livers, lungs, kidneys, and hearts, were commonly eaten raw; otherwise food was roasted or baked—later boiled in iron pots. Meat was often eaten only slightly roasted. Heated stones were put in split rhea, young guanaco, armadillo, and skunk carcasses, and the carcasses were then sewn up and placed on the fire to roast (Coan, 1880, p. 111; Moreno, 1879, p. 254). One end of the rhea egg was punctured, a little of the white taken out, and the egg set vertically on a slow fire to cook (Moreno, 1879, p. 359). Salt was mixed with blood, or used for seasoning meat. The blood of freshly killed guanaco was drunk raw (Coan, 1880, p. 119; Bourne, 1853, p. 71). A nonfermented drink was made of barberry juice. Maté, of later introduction, was very popular.

As food receptacles and eating utensils were used: Valves of mollusks as drinking cups, and, in one early instance (Oviedo, 1851–55, 2:41) "skin," as among the *Ona* (p. 113); in later times, wooden plates and platters, bladders as water containers, wooden or horn spoons, and armadillo shells as broth platters. There were no stated mealtimes. The *Tehuelche* avoided gluttonous eating.

CAMPS AND SHELTERS

Permanent villages were lacking. Some use was made of caves as dwellings in parts of prehistoric Patagonia, perhaps by *Tehuelche*. A skin windbreak very like the modern *Ona* one (p. 110) was apparently used by some of the early *Tehuelche* (Oviedo, 1851–55, 2:41, and lam. 1, fig. 1; cf. Ladrillero, 1880, p. 499, and Cooper, 1925, pp.

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
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this period, thus escaping a long *détour* round the inlet. But our crossing was not effected without trouble; the flood-tide rushing up like a mill-race, and proving almost too much for the steadiness of one of the baggage-horses. After clearing the channel, in our farther progress we passed several small streams with swampy ground, all of which probably discharge themselves into Oazy Harbour, and arrived towards evening at an old Indian encampment situated under a range of hills, running more or less north and south, forming one barrier of a broad and well-watered valley, bounded on the eastern side by the well-known 'Barrancas' of San Gregorio.

Our station was just within the opening of the valley, which, being sheltered from the wind, is the favourite winter quarters of the Southern Tehuelches, whose encampment is usually pitched near Oazy Harbour, called by them 'Oazy Saba.'

Westward the low flats which bordered the shores of the Cabecera del Mar terminated in irregular hills, beyond which higher peaks rose, and they in their turn were overlooked by distant snow-clad summits on the horizon. Among the blue hills of the middle distance floated wreaths of light haze so much resembling smoke that Gallegos, ever on the alert for signs of the deserters, proposed to deviate from our route to investigate, and only my strongly pronounced opinion in favour of haze *versus* smoke induced him to give up the idea. The Argentine Government formerly planned a settlement in this valley, which was not carried out, and the missionaries also proposed to fix a station hereabouts, with Oazy Harbour as a depôt, but the Chilians of Punto Arena set up their claims and compelled the missionaries to desist.

After camp was arranged, the weather, which since our start had been bright with cold winds and moderate frosts at night, changed to rain, and Gallegos proposed to me that, in the event of its continuing bad, we should remain under the shelter of the tent. However, though the night was

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tolerably good order, to receive the present. There were undoubtedly some very tall men amongst them, but what struck me particularly was their splendid development of chest and arms. Although the wind was very sharp, many of them had their mantles thrown back in a careless way, leaving their naked chests exposed in the air, and appeared not the least incommoded. They readily recognised me for an Englishman, coming and examining me closely, and asking for tobacco with a broad grin on their faces, exposing a wonderfully clean and regular set of teeth. My gratifying their importunate requests for tobacco made Sam very jealous, and for some time he bothered me with remarks such as 'Me very cold, no got poncho,' 'Me no got knife, me no got "pellon"' (saddle-cloth), until, finding it useless to beg, he relapsed into sullen silence. A smoke of the pipe, however, brought him back to his usual cheerful temper, and as we galloped along he chanted an Indian song, which consisted of the words 'Ah ge lay loo, Ah ge lay loo,' expressed in various keys.

After a ride of some leagues in a rather more open but still undulating country, a break in the Pampas was reached. Hills of irregular and picturesque outlines, with labyrinthine valleys or ravines, not running in parallel order, but communicating with each other, occupied an extensive district, and though travelling was considerably more difficult, yet the change in the aspect of nature was grateful after the barren monotony of the plains.

We halted in an Indian encampment, situated in a valley underneath a peaked hill called 'Otiti,' where there were pools of fresh and salt water in close proximity. Amongst the incense and thorn bushes, which grow at intervals in these regions, we passed to-day another description of shrub with a thick rough bark, which is readily detached, and leaves a long rattail-like sort of twig. From the Rio Gallegos the soil had become generally of a yellower colour than on the south side of that river, although in the valleys and hollows

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The effect of the river ice piled up on the shore by the tides was very striking. Huge floes had accumulated to the height of fifteen feet and upwards, and besides rendering the passage difficult, had buried the carefully-stacked wood-pile under a small mountain of ice. This was in the comparatively sheltered valley. On the Pampas, when the fierce south wind blew, as it almost invariably did, it seemed impossible to face it and live. One attempt made nearly resulted in Gonzalez being overcome by the sleep which is the forerunner of death, and the horses of all the party absolutely could not advance. The snow lay eighteen inches deep, and we had flattered ourselves that the guanaco and ostrich would prove an easy prey. *They* could not run—but *we* could not chase, and were thankful to make our way, slowly and laboriously, down from the desolate and storm-swept Pampas.

The Indians from the Rio Chico occasionally visited us, and Orkeke's objection to my company was gradually giving way. He had probably feared that an English Señor would require a considerable amount of attention, and give constant trouble; but during our intercourse he found that the stranger could (and did) groom his own horse, and wait on himself generally, as well as take his part in whatever was being done, even to sleeping out with no shelter but the ample guanaco mantle. Casimiro also, according to promise, visited the camp, and argued in my favour, finally obtaining from the chief a somewhat reluctant permission for me to join his party. Towards the end of July some of his Indians had come to the settlement to inform us that the scarcity of game in their vicinity had compelled them to shift their quarters to a place higher up the Kio Chico. They anxiously inquired if the schooner had arrived; we were as eagerly looking for her, but day after day passed, and the looked-for boat did not appear.

On the 24th of July everybody had gone hunting, except Juan Chileno (who was cook for the week), and myself, whom a hurt received in my foot had compelled to remain

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CHAPTER III.

THE RIO CHICO.

Breaking up of the Camp—An Idle Day—A Rash Start—A Dilemma—Alone on the Pampa—Reunion—The Kau or Toldo—The Domestic Interior—The Indian Tribes—Three Races—Order of the March—The Hunt—Indian Game Law—Tehuelche Cookery—Basaltic Hills—An Indian Festival—My First Tehuelche Ball—Mrs. Orkeke's Spill—Fording Rio Chico—A Battle—Death of Cuastro—Dangerous Times—Chilian Conspiracy—Obsidian Plain and Pass—First Ostrich Eggs—Amakaken—Lifting the Boulder—The Devil's Country—God's Hill—Condors and Dinner—Sunrise on the Cordillera—The Plague Herald—Gelgel Aik—Escape from Matrimony—Téle—Eyes of the Desert—Preparations for War—Another Fight—Water Tigers—Indian Bravoes—Iron Ores—Ship Rock—Perch Fishing—Appleykaik—Casimiro's Escape—Arrival at Henno.

THE morning after we had rejoined the Indian camp was marked by the general breaking up of the party. Camillo and some others had already left, and by this time were several marches in advance; Orkeke and Isidoro started off to Santa Cruz, in search of the lost horse, and charged with some little commissions for me. Finally, Casimiro and all the rest broke up their encampment and started, intending to overtake Camillo. Before leaving, Casimiro came to me, and affecting great interest in my welfare, confidentially urged me to accompany himself and live as an inmate of his (or rather Crimè's) toldo, adding that he had been informed that Orkeke had no real intention of marching northward, but designed to keep me in his toldo until, by some means or other, he could possess himself of my arms and ammunition.

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As I saw no reason to believe this story, I declined to comply with the proposal of Casimiro, who, having consoled himself by begging a little coffee, took his departure, and the encampment was reduced to the toldo, of which I was to consider myself an inmate, and another, belonging to the only Indians who remained—Tankelow, Orkeke's brother, and his son, a youth of about eighteen. Besides these, there were three of the Chilian deserters who as narrated had escaped from Punta Arena; one was attached to the household of Tankelow, and the other two to that of Orkeke. One of these was Arica, already mentioned, who being a very clever worker in hide, had employed himself in adorning saddles and bridles for the Indians, by which he had acquired a pretty good stock of gear. The condition of all three was, however, not enviable. They had lowered themselves at first by volunteering to discharge the drudgery of fetching wood and water, and by this time were little better than slaves, obliged to perform the menial offices, which before had been the task of the women. These fair creatures, headed by Mrs. Orkeke—a young woman almost six feet in height, and displaying a corresponding breadth across the shoulders—employed themselves in cutting out and sewing guanaco mantles, weaving fillets for the head, and chattering. Tankelow and his son presently started for a hunt; but as I was not offered a mount, and deemed it more reasonable to give my only charger a good rest and feed, I could only accompany them to the river, the frozen surface of which they crossed, and disappeared up a cañon that led up the barranca, on the northern limit of the valley, to the Upper Pampa. Having wistfully watched them, I reconnoitred the valley of the Rio Chico. Behind me, to the south-east, the river wound through plains covered with withered coarse grass, some eighteen inches high, extending on either bank for several miles till terminated by the rising barranca. Snow lay here and there in patches on some of the higher ground, and increased the dreariness of the prospect. About

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574 strange to say, it never moved from the spot where it was
164 unsaddled, and the Indian during the time he remained in the toldo neither ate nor drank. At the end of three days he mounted his mule, which appeared as fresh as when he arrived, and rode away to the northward. On the following day, whilst hunting, a sickness struck the Indians—some falling dead from their horses, while others, though able to return home, only survived a short time. As is usual when
● [361 disease breaks out, the toldos were removed to some distance
751] from each other, to escape infection, but many men, women, and children died.' Of the fact that a plague or sickness did cause the death of many Indians within a few days at some encampment in these plains, I received further and reliable confirmation, my informant, who was in the party, stating that the Pampa tribe was decimated.

133 In the cliffs above the river on the eastern side of our encampment I observed many balls of sandstone of various sizes. On breaking one in two, a piece of what seemed to be ironstone formed a nucleus, around which layers of sand appeared to have been aggregated. By what process these balls could have been formed was to me a mystery; but they proved very handy for bolas, only requiring to be slightly reduced in size. Hunting to the westward from the encampment, we came across several muddy, or rather clayey bogs, into one of which, when in full pursuit of an ostrich, I rode, and my horse sank deep, throwing his rider a complete summersault; and with much ado I first picked up myself, and then with greater difficulty extricated my horse from the tenacious morass.

000 After Arica's return, the Chilians manifested a restless spirit, and frequently asked me the direction of the Chupat settlement. I replied that it lay about 150 leagues to the E.N.E. from this point, as far as I could judge; but that it would be better for them to remain with the Indians, and do the women's work of providing wood and water, &c., than to start off into a wild and dreary pampa, where they

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the N.W. and N. the hills—which almost merited the name of mountains—were peculiarly rugged, more especially towards their summits. About N.N.E. by compass from our camp, there was a pass formed by a dip or break in the range leading north, and through the mouth of the pass we could see the smoke of the hunting parties of the Araucanian Indians, who were, however, many leagues distant. Throughout Patagonia smoke is always visible at a great distance, and the practised eyes of the Indians can distinguish it from the clouds, when ordinary persons would be unable to discern it unless pointed out to them. On the southern and eastern sides of the valley lay a range of hills, the rugged summits of which rose from lower slopes of more regular swell, and presenting more even and down-like surfaces than those on the western and northern sides. Immediately above our encampment the hill of Henno, from which the valley is named, rose from the plain. Near the summit of this hill Orkeke and myself, who for amusement had ridden up to it, one day came across the bleached skeleton of a man, perhaps one of two young Argentines who, as I was subsequently informed, had travelled thus far in company with the Indians, and had been for some—or no—reason killed by them near this spot. In the surrounding hills red porphyry frequently cropped out, and also veins of a red agate, unlike the flint agate so common in all the plains of Patagonia. The rocks near the summit of the hills were generally of igneous formation, and on the slopes of these hills frequent springs gushed out, easily discoverable from a distance by the vivid green of the grass growing round them. As we gazed down from the height of Henno, the valley lay before us like a picture; our few toldos were situated in a group to the east, on the south side of the stream; about a quarter of a mile to the north the thirty or forty toldos of the Northern Indians were pitched, and opposite to them, on the north side of the stream, those of the party commanded by Jackechan or Juan. The scene was animated but peaceful: here might

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which we dried ourselves and cooked our dinner. A more romantic-looking spot than this I was never in. On the other side of the stream was a mass of grey rocks, half hid by shrubs, from amongst which here and there a dead tree stood up. On one side the grass was beautifully green, and the trees were growing in scattered round clumps a few yards apart; doves were cooing in their branches, and young ostriches were running about. These, I am sorry to say, were caught by the horsemen, who jumped down and secured them: hunger had no scruples, and two furnished a good meal for each wet and starving traveller. Despite our ducking, we were soon all in high spirits, and some of us, before going back to the toldos, proceeded to search for wild potatoes, a few of which we brought back. The following morning the sun rose bright, with a clear sky, so we continued our march in a westerly direction, arriving about midday at a gorge amongst the wooded hills, where I hoped that we were going to encamp; the women, however, diverged to the northward, and proceeded up a ravine or cañon in the barranca of the high pampa, pitched the toldos in a gloomy prison-like spot. Melancholy as it seemed to me, it afforded abundant pasture for the horses, which between the hills was scarce, so that they were inclined to wander into the woods and be hard to find when wanted, which undoubtedly was the reason of our taking the cañon in preference to the wooded valley. This cañon, a little beyond our camp, divided into two, in one of which was a laguna frequented by avocets. The stream, which in spring poured down the glen, presented only an occasional pool and a dry bed, in which were numbers of rounded white stones of chalky substance, supplying capital materials for bolas, easily reduced to the suitable form: it also occurred to me that the chips pounded to powder might have the curative effects of chalk mixture, as diarrhœa had affected some of the party, and the result of the medicinal experiment was satisfactory, though it was impossible to prevail on the Indians to try the

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Christmas time of my life: to parody the 'Ancient Mariner,' it was 'Cattle, cattle everywhere, and never a bit of beef.' The following day was spent in the toldos, and some of the Indians were desirous, or pretended to be, of going once more in search of cattle. Orkeke would not hear of it, so on the 28th we marched, following the course of the river in a more or less north-east direction. The weather was beautiful, and after leaving the plain we rode along the winding valley, now and then starting a herd of guanaco or a solitary ostrich. Towards evening we encamped on the banks of the river, and the women, after pitching the toldos, employed themselves in grubbing up potatoes. This day we saw smoke to the north, caused by the hunting-parties of the other Indians, and also some at a greater distance, which Orkeke said was that of the Araucanian Indians, whom it was expected that we should shortly meet with.

On the 29th we were preparing to march, and while the women were engaged in lading the horses some of us were picking the berries of the 'Calafate,' or barberry (Berberis buccifolia), or looking for strawberries, when a boy, from a party of other Indians occupying the toldos near at hand, rode up as if despatched as a chasqui, and stated that his party had communicated with the Araucanians, amongst whom there had been a row in a drinking bout, resulting in the death of the cacique. This story was fully believed, and Orkeke was rather perplexed, as perhaps the new cacique might not be friendly disposed towards the Tehuelches. Without hunting, we rode quietly down to the next encampment, where the two strange toldos had already arrived. On our near approach one of the Indians came to meet us, and whilst discussing a pipe, after the observance of the usual ceremonial prescribed by etiquette (as we had not seen the man before), we asked him about the row amongst the Araucanos, which turned out to be all a hoax on the part of the promising youth who had visited us. After a while we

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36 adjourned to the toldos, situated on the bend of the river near a ford or pass. We had now arrived at the camp agreed on as a general rendezvous at Henno, previous to the dispersion of the Indians. This valley is called Teckel, and is a favourite resting-place after the young guanaco season, both for the purpose of refreshing the horses and manufacturing the young guanaco skins into mantles, previous to proceeding to trade either at the Rio Negro or with the Indians of Las Manzanas. The encampment is usually situated on the ground occupied at this time, viz., on the west side of the river, about a mile from a large barren hill which shuts out the view of the Cordilleras. On the east side the valley extends some three miles, and continues open to the north for perhaps six miles. It is all fertile, but the best grazing ground is at the north-east end. The banks of the river, which are destitute of trees, are in many places high, and formed under the surface earth of various stratified clays—blue, white, and red. In the bottom of the stream, which is singularly free from stones, thick beds of clay are of frequent occurrence, almost approaching to the tuth found in the Parana and other confluents of La Plata, and in some spots there are beds of black sand, probably auriferous; fish are procurable in any eddy or pool, and crayfish abound and form the most tempting bait for the others. Out of some of the finest clay I was enabled to manufacture a pipe by the simple process of shaping it in the hand and then baking it in the ashes, but it did not last long. Shortly after our arrival one of the small children, whilst playing with bolas formed out of the foot and sinews of an ostrich, hurt himself, and in consequence a slaughter of mares took place, which opportunely enabled us to dispense with hunting and spare our horses, which by this time stood in sore need of some bye days, though, as there was a good resource, we frequently indulged in a race just to keep the horses in exercise. After we had been about a week settled here, the women being all hard at work making up mantles—which will be described in

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183 stripped of fruit, and it was necessary to proceed much
197 further to the north to procure any; but an expedition to visit that district and to get fruit, planned by Orkeke, Hinchel, myself, and others, proved impracticable. Beyond the apple-groves the place was also pointed out where the araucarias grow, from which the pinnoes are gathered, just below the snow-clad mountains we had viewed from the
A ridge above the Rio Limay, and about thirty miles distant.
231 In our valley the pasture was rather scanty, although
423 there appeared to be sufficient for the three flocks of small stock, each owned by one of Chocupie's wives, to get into
A good condition; but sheep will feed anywhere. Immediately
[417] behind the toldos was situated a corral for enclosing cattle, none of which, however, were visible, having, probably, been driven off to some secluded valley near at hand, to avoid
T giving our people a chance of helping themselves. Round
A this corral were grouped the Indians of Chocupie's tribe,
● 361 and the Fireaters with fruit, &c., to barter; and between the corral and the river lay the bivouac of the Tehuelches; our frontis being denoted by Casimiro's flag, the colours of the Argentine Confederation. Up and down the valley, and
A even about the neighbouring hills, were scattered our horses.
362 Proceeding to inspect the toldos, at which I had given but a cursory glance the night before, I found that they were all fixed dwellings; that is to say, not put together so as to be moved in marches, like those of the Patagonians. They were, indeed, constructed in the same manner, but the poles were much shorter, and the whole edifice more resembled a house.

Chocupie's toldo was quite sixteen feet high, and able to accommodate forty men; while there lay a huge billets of wood burned in the front part. It was closed in completely, except a doorway in the centre with a skin curtain by way of door; and along the front ran a species of verandah, composed of interwoven branches, forming a pleasant canopy, under the shade of which we sat and

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the public during the preparation of these pages for the press, and to which reference will be made in the ensuing chapter. 203
Jacksham, after the return of his messenger, proceeded to Marguesito, in the vicinity of which he met the parties under Tenedore, Patricio, Antonio, and other petty chiefs. These all united, and, sending into Patagones, obtained liquor and other stores, with which, as before mentioned, they had a drink for two days, but no quarrels or fights took place—a fact which redounds to the credit of the chiefs. 439 273
After waiting a month for our party, they, owing to the scarcity of game, had come by easy stages to this place (Trinita). Jacksham then explained that the first tolderia were those of the Pampa Indians, under Tenedore and Champeye, the former being absent in Patagones, getting his rations of animals; his Indians are pure Pampas, and are often called Kewkinchen,* or armadilloes, for some reason unknown to me. Some of them are in the service of the Argentine Government, and liable to be called upon by Linares, chief of the tame Indians. The remaining tolderia were those belonging to the Indians under Antonio and Patricio, who were composed of mixed Tehuelches and Pampas. The two encampments were situated about half a mile apart, separated by a winding stream, in some places concealed by most unusually high reeds. The position was entirely surrounded on the eastern, southern, and western sides by high rocky eminences; but to the north the valley apparently continued for some miles; its breadth was about three miles, and everywhere in the vicinity of the stream, which in some places had overflowed its banks and formed a marsh, the most luxuriant pasture was growing. 621 361

On returning to Patricio's tolderia, I formally asked for the necessary horses to prosecute our journey, but was refused on the grounds of his having none to spare; so we determined, as our horses showed symptoms of fatigue and sore backs, to give them one day's rest before proceeding. We passed 579

* Quirquincho.

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haps my shaggy hair and dress, not altogether of the neatest, may have been against me.

The Indians were soon in full enjoyment of some grog and biscuits, which they naturally asked me to share. After a bite and a sup, finding the proceedings slow, I left the room, and shortly after met Mr. Alexander Fraser and Mr. Grenfell, the owners of an estancia a few miles lower down the river; and after introducing myself, was most kindly received, and supplied with cash, a civilised medium of which I had not a sou to enable me to gratify the desire of treating my Indian friends to a bottle or two of wine and spirits and a few loaves of bread.

Mr. Fraser hospitably pressed me to come on to his establishment at once, but being desirous of handing the letters to the Commandante without delay, I returned across the river with the Indians.

A foretaste of Rio Negro manners was given us at the other side, as one of the horses, saddle, lazo and all, was missing—stolen by some of the civilised inhabitants. The horse belonged to El Ingles, and had been lent to Meña to go down from the encampment to the Guardia; the lazo belonged to me.

At the camp most of the people got more or less drunk, and Nacho received a richly-deserved thrashing for being pugnacious, after which he was lashed down, and left to cool in the frost for an hour.

In the morning I started for Patagones, accompanied by El Ingles and another Indian; but as our horses proved to be too tired to proceed into Patagones, we stopped for the night in a toldo at San Xaviel, the head-quarters of Linares and his tame Indians.

I took up my quarters at the toldo of one Chaloupe, and after supper, being desirous of communicating the political arrangements to the chief, proceeded on horseback behind another horseman, who proved to be a brother of Rouque Pinto, to the chief's residence, a long, low house.

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was frozen, and a large iron bolt, doubtless from some wreck, served as a crowbar to dig holes for the stakes. The encampment was on a hill-side, near a low swamp, which furnished abundance of water, such as it was.

We had scarcely settled down, and I was dreading the stagnant monotony of camp life, when dulness was dispelled in a most unwelcome manner. Knots of Indians could be seen in murmuring conversation, whose glances betrayed the bent of their passions. They were again getting impatient of my life, and caresses and flattery were of no avail to stem the rising tide. On the evening of the third day, I was summoned out of the lodge by the chief, and followed him in silence, with a trembling presentiment of evil. He led me to a spot where twenty or thirty leading spirits in the tribe sat ranged in a circle, — the fatal ring was once more set to ensnare me! Once I had escaped. Was it possible to effect a second escape? Everything said no. The chances seemed a hundred to one against it What had I left unsaid, to tempt their cupidity, to excite alarm, to make them value my safety or dread the effects of harming me? I could think of nothing, and the dismal prospect benumbed every faculty of my soul. But, as I entered the ominous circle, an access of fresh strength, the courage of desperation, enabled me to bear up with energy against perplexity and fear; to resolve that I would meet them with a steadfast eye and an inflexible mind, — a force which, though springing out of weakness, should prove stronger than their utmost malice.

Having seated myself near the chief, the consultation began and proceeded much as before, but with increased vehemence. Their demonstrations were alarming, but, to

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CHAPTER VII.

A new torture — Bloody gossip — An explosion nearly fatal — Plea of insanity — Reconciliation — River Santa Cruz — Naval architecture — Original mode of ferrying — Accident — Ominous demonstrations thereupon — Perilous superstition — Plans of escape — The chief fighting his battles over again — Prospects brighten — A blind hint to naturalists.

From this point we moved again in a north-westerly direction, finding game more plenty, and among other animals captured a species of fox, the first I had seen in the country. The camping-ground selected was a waste more desolate than had yet greeted my sight, even in Patagonia, — a low marsh, surrounded by sand-hills destitute of even the semblance or vestige of vegetation, past or present. The horses were let loose to solve the problem of existence as they could, while my landladies, with their canine assistants, served up a skunk and two ostrich-legs for supper. I thought myself fortunate at getting so ample a meal, having been on short allowance the preceding day.

Here a new torture was inflicted. There had been abundance of voluble hatred against me, as I had too good reason to know, but it was around and behind me. Now, presuming, doubtless, on my ignorance of their language, they came to utter their bloodthirsty thoughts in my presence. At night, before retiring, the women began to